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Letter dated 21 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of an address entitled "A different behaviour", given by President Fidel Castro at the José Martí Anti-imperialist Tribune on 20 May 2005 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 148, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Orlando **Requeijo Gual**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 21 May 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

A different behaviour

Address by the President of the Republic of Cuba, Fidel Castro Ruz, at the José Martí Anti-imperialist Tribune on 20 May 2005

My fellow countrymen,

What I am about to read to you has been prepared on the basis of many documents from our archives. I have had very little time to prepare it and have had to rely on assistance from various colleagues, since I promised yesterday that it would be ready by 6 p.m. today. I have decided to entitle it "A different behaviour".

12 April 1997: A bomb explodes in the "Aché" discotheque of the Meliá Cohíba Hotel. This was the first in a series of terrorist attacks on hotels carried out by the network established in Central America by Luis Posada Carriles and financed by the Cuban American National Foundation.

30 April 1997: Special forces from the Ministry of the Interior manage to defuse an explosive device discovered on the fifteenth floor of the Meliá Cohíba Hotel.

12 July 1997: Two explosions occur almost simultaneously at the Capri and Nacional Hotels. Four people are injured.

4 August 1997: Terrorist bomb goes off at the Meliá Cohíba Hotel.

11 August 1997: The Board of Directors of the Cuban American National Foundation publishes a self-satisfied and cynical message in which it literally describes the hotel bombings as "incidents of internal rebellion which have been taking place in Cuba over the past few weeks" and states that "the Cuban American National Foundation (...) supports these without hesitation or reservations".

4 September 1997: Explosions at the Copacabana, Chateau and Tritón Hotels, and at La Bodeguita del Medio. Fabio di Celmo, a young Italian tourist, is killed in the first of these.

Following the terrorist acts perpetrated from 17 October 1992 to 30 April 1997, a list was drawn up of 13 serious acts against tourist facilities, in particular, most of them financed by the Cuban American National Foundation. A report was prepared and delivered to the President of the United States by a leading political figure who made a private visit to Cuba at the beginning of May.

Many notes concerning these facts were also sent to the United States Government through the United States Interests Section in Havana (USINT).

1 October 1997: At 11 p.m. Michael Kozak, Head of USINT, telephoned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX) to pass on information from a third country indicating that another bomb attack on a tourist facility in or around Havana could take place within the next 24 hours, on 1 or 2 October. The information could not be confirmed but USINT wanted MINREX to be aware of it.

2 October 1997: The Head of USINT was summoned to MINREX in the morning to provide more details about the aforementioned information and to be thanked officially for having passed it on.

5 October 1997: The Head of USINT was summoned to MINREX to be read and given a copy of the following message:

> "With regard to the information about a possible bomb attack on a tourist facility in Havana on 1 or 2 October, we would like to inform you that, although no explosion occurred, it has been confirmed that the information was strictly accurate and that its characteristics were similar to those of earlier plans.
>
> Since this may be of interest and use to the United States authorities, we wish to inform you that the source of the information has been shown to be reliable and has, as requested, acted with the utmost discretion. We are very grateful".

The Head of USINT replied that the information provided to him was useful; that they had obtained the information but that it had not been possible to confirm it, since it was a rumour; that now they could place more trust in the source; that he would be travelling to Washington the following Sunday and would take the information, which he regarded as positive, with him; that if they obtained anything more from that source they would know how to proceed; that they had not uncovered anything further from the investigations conducted in the United States but that they would pursue them in Central America, particularly after the article published in the *Miami Herald*. He said that any information that Cuba had and that it could provide to the United States would be very useful. He concluded by saying that "this was good".

7 March 1998: The Head of USINT asked to see someone at MINREX urgently in order to pass on some sensitive information. He said that he had information from a source whose reliability had not been confirmed to the effect that a group of Cuban exiles was planning to carry out a bomb attack in Cuba between 7 and 8 March. He did not know the specific location, time or target but, according to the source, the explosives were already in Cuba.

9 March 1998: The Minister for Foreign Affairs met with the Head of USINT and read him the following note:

> "With regard to the verbal information provided on Saturday 7 March concerning plans for terrorist attacks organized by Cuban exiles for possible execution on 7 or 8 of this month and the fact that the explosives are already in Cuba, we would like to inform you of the following:
>
> 1. It has again been demonstrated that the sources of information of the United States authorities on these activities are absolutely reliable.
>
> 2. In the afternoon of Wednesday, 4 March, two foreign nationals were arrested and relieved of the explosives and other materials with which they intended to carry out, in return for a cash payment for each bomb, four terrorist attacks similar to previous ones and organized in the same way, with the same purposes and methods.
>
> 3. The Cuban authorities are trying to gather as much additional information as possible.

4. These criminal acts are extremely serious and affect not only Cuba and the United States but also other countries in the region. We have a duty to prevent such acts from being carried out with impunity. This will not be difficult if Cuba and the United States coordinate, through the relevant bodies, the campaign against such acts. This has been done in an entirely serious and discreet manner in respect of certain drug trafficking cases.

5. Thus far we have not released this information to the public because we are still taking certain measures and conducting investigations, but it will not be possible to avoid releasing it at the appropriate time.

6. We are sincerely grateful for the information you have provided".

When the reading was over, the Head of USINT first thanked and congratulated the Cuban authorities for their efficiency. He added that if we had any more information or leads that they could follow to determine who was supporting or controlling those activities, it would be very useful if we could pass it on, since the United States Government had already taken a firm decision to pursue those responsible for these acts and to enforce the law. He insisted that USINT still had no information on who was behind those acts; that there were several people with a record of such activities but that not all of them lived, worked in or passed through Miami, or even through the United States; that some of them were in other countries, all of which made it more difficult to take action against them; that the United States Government had made it clear that those acts benefited no one. A USINT official accompanying him added that Colonel Rabeiro's reference on television to Cuba having recordings of telephone conversations between the Salvadoran and someone in Central America was very interesting and that the information would be very useful, since it would make it easier to locate those who were behind the activities. They added that after the wars in Central America many people from the extreme right still lived in those countries and were involved in criminal activities. They appreciated the importance of being able to verify that their source was reliable and understood the importance of working together in that area. At the end of the meeting, they once again stressed the usefulness of sharing any information.

18 April 1998: In view of these positive exchanges and aware that the writer Gabriel García Márquez would soon be travelling to the United States, where he would be meeting with William Clinton, like so many other people in the world a reader and admirer of his books and with whom García Márquez had met before, I decided to send a message to the President of the United States, which I personally drafted. The message dealt briefly and concisely with seven issues. In this report, I will limit myself to the first issue, which relates most directly to the serious events taking place today, namely, the terrorist attacks against the Cuban people organized and financed from the United States. It was entitled "Summary of issues that Gabriel García Márquez may confidentially transmit to President Clinton".

Point 1 (textually and with no corrections):

"An important issue. Plans continue to be hatched for terrorist acts against Cuba paid for by the Cuban American National Foundation and using Central American mercenaries. There have already been two further attempts to detonate bombs in tourist resorts before and after the visit of the Pope. In the first case, the perpetrators were able to escape and return to Central

America by air, after failing to achieve their objective and leaving behind their technical equipment and explosives, which were seized. In the second case, three mercenaries were arrested and their explosives and other equipment seized. The individuals in question are Guatemalan nationals and would have received US$ 1,500 for every one of the four bombs that should have exploded.

In both cases, the perpetrators were recruited and supplied by agents of the network established by the Cuban American National Foundation. They are now plotting and preparing to set off bombs in Cuban aircraft or aircraft from other countries carrying tourists between Cuba and Latin American countries. The method is similar: conceal a small device inside the aircraft, a powerful explosive with a detonator controlled by a digital timer that can be programmed up to 99 hours in advance, then disembark usually at the plane's destination. The explosion will take place either on the ground or while the aircraft is en route to its next destination. The methods are truly diabolical: easy-to-assemble mechanisms, components almost impossible to detect, minimal training required for their use, and almost absolute impunity. These are extremely dangerous for airlines and for tourist or any other type of facilities. They can be used to commit very serious crimes and offences. If these methods are disclosed and publicized, it might unleash an epidemic as happened in the past with the epidemic of aircraft hijackings. Other extremist groups of Cuban origin based in the United States are beginning to move in this direction.

United States investigation and intelligence agencies are in possession of sufficient and reliable information on the principal individuals responsible. If they really want to, they can put a stop to this new form of terrorism in time. It will be impossible to do so if the United States fails to discharge its elemental duty to combat it. That responsibility cannot be left solely to Cuba, because any country in the world could soon be the victim of such acts".

7 May 1998: Gabriel García's meeting at the White House.

Written report by Gabriel García Márquez on his mission to transmit the message to President Clinton

Verbatim copy without omissions

"At the end of March, after I had confirmed with Princeton University that I would be giving a literary workshop from 25 April, I telephoned Bill Richardson to ask him to arrange for me to have a private meeting with President Clinton to discuss the Colombia situation. Richardson asked me to call him a week before my trip for an answer. A few days later, I went to Havana to get some information I needed for a newspaper article I was going to write on the Pope's visit and, during a conversation with Fidel Castro, I mentioned the possibility of my meeting with President Clinton. That gave rise to the idea that Fidel could send him a confidential message about a sinister terrorist plan which Cuba had just uncovered and which could affect not only Cuba and the United States but also many other countries. He himself decided that, in order to avoid putting Clinton in the difficult position of having to respond, he should not send a personal letter. He opted instead for a written summary of our conversation about the plot and other issues of mutual interest. In addition to the text, he suggested two unwritten questions that I could raise with Clinton in the appropriate circumstances.

"That night I realized that my trip to Washington had taken an unforeseen and significant turn, and that I could no longer view it as a purely personal visit. Thus, I not only confirmed with Richardson the date of my arrival but I also told him, by telephone, that I was carrying an urgent message for President Clinton. Out of respect for the agreed secrecy, I didn't tell him over the phone who was sending it — although he must have suspected — nor did I intimate that any delay in its delivery could result in major disasters and the deaths of innocent people. His answer was not forthcoming during my week in Princeton, which made me think that the White House was also considering the fact that the reason for my initial request had changed. I even thought that the meeting would not be granted.

"As soon as I arrived in Washington on Friday, 1 May, one of Richardson's assistants telephoned me to say that the President could not see me because he would be in California until Wednesday 6, and I had planned to travel to Mexico one day before that date. However, they suggested that I should meet with the head of the President's National Security Council (NSC), Sam Berger, who could receive my message on behalf of the President.

"My disturbing suspicion was that they were imposing conditions so that the message would reach the security services but not the President himself. Berger had been present at a meeting I had had with Clinton in the White House Oval Office in September 1997, and, while his few comments on the Cuba situation did not run counter to those of the President, I cannot say that he agreed wholeheartedly with all of them. Therefore, I did not feel able to accept of my own volition the alternative of being received by Berger rather than by the President, particularly since it was such a sensitive message which, in addition, was not mine. My personal opinion was that it should be delivered only to Clinton himself.

"The only thing that I could think of immediately was to inform Richardson's office that if the change of interlocutor was due only to the President's absence, I could extend my stay in Washington until he returned. They replied that they would let him know. Not long afterwards I found in the hotel a telephone message from Ambassador James Dobbins, the NSC Senior Director for Inter-American Affairs, but I chose not to acknowledge receipt of it while my proposal to wait for the President's return was being considered.

"I was not in a hurry. I had written more than 20 useable pages of my memoirs on the idyllic Princeton campus, and the pace had not decreased in my impersonal room at the Washington hotel, where I spent up to 10 hours a day writing. However, even if I refused to admit it, the true reason for my confinement was the custody of the message lying in the safe. At the airport in Mexico, I had lost a coat because I was at the same time keeping an eye on my laptop computer, the briefcase with my drafts and diskettes of the book I was working on, and the original message, of which there were no copies. The mere idea of losing it sent panicked shivers down my spine, not so much for the loss itself as for the fact that it would have been very easy to identify its source and destination. I therefore kept a close watch on it as I wrote, ate my meals and received visitors in the hotel room, whose safe inspired no confidence, since, instead of a combination lock, it had a key that seemed to have been bought at the local hardware store. I always carried it in my pocket and after every unavoidable absence I checked to ensure that the paper was still in its place and in its sealed envelope. I had read it so many times that I had practically learned

it by heart, just so that I could feel reassured in case I had to explain any of the issues when I delivered it.

"In addition, I always assumed that during that period — my telephone conversations as well as those of my interlocutors — were being monitored. But I remained calm in the knowledge that I was on an irreproachable mission, one that was good for both Cuba and the United States. My other serious problem was that I could not discuss my doubts with anyone without divulging the secret. Cuba's diplomatic representative in Washington, Fernando Remírez, made himself fully available to me in order to keep the channels of communication with Havana open, but confidential communications are so slow and risky from Washington — particularly on such a sensitive matter — that ours could only be transmitted via a special emissary. The response was a polite request that I should stay in Washington for as long as necessary to carry out the task, just as I had resolved, and I was asked to be most careful to avoid offending Sam Berger by not accepting him as my interlocutor. The amusing end of the message left no doubt about its author, even without a signature: 'We hope that you'll be able to do a lot of writing'.

"As chance would have it, former President César Gaviria had arranged a private dinner for Monday night with Thomas 'Mack' McLarty, who had just resigned from his position as President Clinton's Adviser on Latin America, but continued to be his oldest and closest friend. We had met the previous year, and since then the Gaviria family had been planning the dinner for two reasons: to discuss with McLarty the complexities of the Colombian situation and to indulge his wife's desire to clarify with me a number of questions she had about my books.

"The occasion seemed providential. Gaviria is a great friend, a smart and original counsellor and as well-informed as anyone about the situation in Latin America, as well as an alert and understanding observer of Cuba's reality. I arrived at his house an hour before the agreed time and, having had no time to consult anybody, I took the liberty of disclosing to him the essence of my mission so that I could benefit from his advice.

"Gaviria gave me the true measure of the problem and brought some order to the puzzle. He made me see that the precautions taken by Clinton's advisers were only normal, given the political and security risks associated with a President of the United States personally receiving such sensitive information through an irregular channel. He did not have to explain it because I suddenly remembered a case in point: at our dinner at Martha's Vineyard, during the crisis caused by the mass exodus of 1994, President Clinton had given me permission to talk to him about that and other burning issues related to Cuba, but had warned me that he would be unable to utter a single word. I will never forget how attentively he listened to me, and the herculean efforts he must have had to make in order to refrain from responding to my comments on a number of highly charged issues.

"Gaviria also alerted me to the fact that Berger is an efficient and serious official who must be taken fully into account in relations with the President. He also made me see that the mere fact of assigning him to meet with me was a special high-level privilege, since private requests like mine usually did the rounds of the peripheral White House offices for years or were transferred to junior officers in the CIA or the State Department. In any case, Gaviria seemed sure that the text delivered to Berger would reach the President himself, and that was the main thing. Finally, just as I had hoped, he told me that at the end of the dinner he would leave

me alone with McLarty, who could arrange for me to have direct access to the President.

"The evening was pleasant and fruitful; it was just the Gaviria family and us. McLarty, like Clinton, is from the South and both men are friendly and easygoing like people from the Caribbean. The ice was broken early into dinner, particularly on the subject of United States policy towards Latin America with respect to drug trafficking and the peace processes. 'Mack' was so well informed that he knew even the smallest details of my interview with President Clinton of the previous September, during which we had discussed in depth the shooting down of the light aircraft in Cuba and mentioned the idea that the Pope could act as a United States mediator during his trip to Cuba.

"McLarty's general position on relations with Colombia — which he seems willing to work on — is that United States policies must be radically changed. He told us that the Government was willing to make contact with any elected President in order to work towards peace. But neither he nor the other officials with whom I spoke later have any clear thoughts about what those changes might be. The conversation was so open and flowing that when Gaviria and his family left us alone in the dining room, McLarty and I were like two old friends.

"I unhesitatingly disclosed the content of the message for his President and he did not conceal his shock about the terrorist plan, even though he did not know the terrible details. He was not aware that I had requested to see the President but he promised to speak to him as soon as he returned from California. Encouraged by the ease of the conversation, I dared to suggest that he should accompany me to the meeting with the President, preferably without any other officials, so that we could talk freely. The only question he asked me — and I've never known why — was whether Richardson knew what was in the message, to which I replied in the negative. He ended the conversation with the promise that he would speak to the President.

"Early on Tuesday morning I reported to Havana in the usual manner on the main topics discussed over dinner, and I took the liberty of asking a timely question: if the President ultimately decided not to see me and entrusted the task to McLarty and Berger, to which one of them should I deliver the message? The response seemed to favour McLarty, but I must be careful not to offend Berger.

"That day I had lunch at the Provence restaurant with Mrs. McLarty, since our conversation on literature had not been possible during dinner at the Gaviria's. However, the questions she had noted down were soon answered and all that remained was her curiosity about Cuba. I explained as much as I could and I think she felt reassured. During dessert, unprompted, she phoned her husband from the table and he let me know that he had not yet seen the President but that he hoped to have some news for me during the course of the day.

"Indeed, scarcely two hours later one of his assistants informed me through César Gaviria's office that the meeting would take place the following day at the White House, and would be with McLarty and three senior NSC officials. I thought that if Sam Berger had been among them they would have mentioned his name, and now I had the opposite feeling: I was worried that he might not be present. To what extent could that have been due to my carelessness in a tapped phone call? But now that didn't matter, since McLarty had made the arrangement with the President, the

latter should already know about the message. Thus, I decided immediately and without consulting anyone not to wait any longer: I would go to the meeting to deliver the message to McLarty. I was so certain that I reserved a seat on a direct flight to Mexico at 5.30 p.m. the following afternoon. I was in the process of doing that when I received from Havana the response to my latest consultation, which contained the most constraining permission that I have ever received: 'We have faith in your talents'.

"The meeting took place on Wednesday, 6 May at 11.15 a.m. in McLarty's offices at the White House. I was met by the aforementioned three officials from the National Security Council: Richard Clarke, Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and presidential adviser on international policy issues, particularly the campaign against terrorism and drugs; James Dobbins, NSC Senior Director for Inter-American Affairs with the rank of ambassador and presidential adviser on Latin America and the Caribbean; and Jeff Delaurentis, Director of Inter-American Affairs at NSC and special adviser on Cuba. There was no chance, at any time, to ask why Berger was not there. The three officials were pleasant and extremely professional.

"I did not have any personal notes but I knew every last word of the message, and I had noted in my electronic organizer the only thing I was afraid of forgetting: the two questions that were not in writing. 'Mack' was wrapping up a meeting in another room. While we waited, Dobbins gave me a rather pessimistic overview of the Colombia situation. His information was the same as that given by McLarty during Monday's dinner, but he was more familiar with it. I had told Clinton the previous year that the United States anti-drug policy was an aggravating factor in Colombia's historical violence. That is why I was struck by the fact that this group from NSC — without using my words, of course — seemed to agree that the policy should be changed. They were very careful not to give their views on the Government or the current candidates, but it was clear that they found the situation dreadful and the future uncertain. I was not happy about the proposed amendments, because various observers of our policies in Washington had described them to me with alarm. 'Now that they really want to help they are more dangerous than ever', one of them said to me, 'because they want to stick their noses into everything'.

"McLarty, dressed in a bespoke suit and with impeccable manners, entered with the sense of urgency of someone who had interrupted something of capital importance to deal with us. Nevertheless, he brought to the meeting a relaxed, workmanlike and good-natured tone. Ever since the night of the dinner I had appreciated the fact that he always looked his interlocutor in the eye. It was the same during this meeting. After a warm embrace, he took a seat opposite me with his hands on his knees and began the discussion with a set phrase that was so well said that it seemed true: 'We are at your disposal'.

"I wanted to establish from the outset that I would be speaking in my own capacity as a writer, with no other merit or mandate, particularly on the subject of Cuba, which provoked such acrimony and partisanship. I therefore began by making a point for the benefit of the hidden recording devices: 'This is not an official visit'.

"They all nodded in agreement and I was surprised by their unexpected solemnity. Then, in a simple manner and employing a colloquial narrative style, I told them when, how and why the conversation with Fidel Castro that had given rise to the informal notes to be delivered to President Clinton had taken place. I handed them to McLarty in the sealed envelope and I asked him to read them so that he

could comment on them. The notes consisted of the English translation of seven numbered issues which filled six double-spaced pages: terrorist plot; degree of satisfaction at the measures announced on 20 March for the resumption of flights to Cuba from the United States; Richardson's trip to Havana in January of 1998; Cuba's arguments for refusing humanitarian aid; appreciation for the Pentagon's favourable report on Cuba's military situation; (I should add that this was a report which stated that Cuba did not pose any threat to the security of the United States) 'best wishes for a solution to the Iraqi crisis; and appreciation for the comments on Cuba made by Clinton in the presence of Mandela and Kofi Annan'.

Here, as you can see, the other points are listed.

"McLarty did not read the message aloud to everyone as I had expected and as he would certainly have done if he had known its content beforehand. He read it to himself, apparently using the speed reading method that President Kennedy had made fashionable, but his changing emotions showed on his face like points of light dancing on water. I had read it so many times that I could almost work out which of his expressions corresponded to the various points contained in the document.

"The first point, about the terrorist plot, elicited a grumble: 'That's terrible'. Later he suppressed a mischievous laugh and, without interrupting his reading, said 'we have common enemies'. I think he said that with reference to the fourth point, which describes a group of senators conspiring to block the approval of the Torres-Rangel and Dodd bills and expresses appreciation for Clinton's efforts to salvage them.

"When he had finished reading, he handed the paper to Dobbins, who passed it on to Clarke. They both read it while 'Mack' sang the praises of Mortimer Zuckerman, publisher of the magazine *U.S. News & World Report*, who had travelled to Havana the previous February. He made that remark on account of something he had just read in point six of the document, but he did not answer the implicit question of whether or not Zuckerman had told Clinton about the two twelve-hour conversations that he had had with Fidel Castro.

"The point that took practically all of the useful time after the reading was the terrorist plan, which made an impression on everyone. I told them that I had flown to Mexico after having learned of it in Havana and had had to overcome my fear that a bomb would explode. I felt that the time was right to ask the first personal question suggested by Fidel: Wouldn't it be possible for the FBI to contact their Cuban counterparts with a view to mounting a joint campaign against terrorism? Before they could react I added a line of my own: 'I'm sure that the Cuban authorities would react positively and promptly'.

"I was surprised at how immediate and energetic the reaction of the four men was. Clarke, who seemed to be the most familiar with the subject, said it was a very good idea but warned me that the FBI did not take up cases that were featured in the papers while they were under investigation. Would the Cubans be willing to keep the case secret? As I was anxious to ask my second question, I gave a reply designed to relax the atmosphere: 'Cubans like nothing better than keeping secrets'.

"Lacking an adequate motive for my second question, I decided to present it as a personal assertion: cooperation in matters of security could help create the right climate for the resumption of travel to Cuba by Americans. My shrewdness

backfired, because Dobbins misunderstood and said that that issue would be resolved when the measures announced on 20 March were implemented.

"After clearing up the misunderstanding, I spoke of the pressure I feel from the many Americans from all walks of life who come to me for help in making contacts in Cuba for business or pleasure. I mentioned one of them, Donald Newhouse, the publisher of various periodicals and chairman of the board of directors of the Associated Press (AP), who had treated me to a lavish dinner at his country mansion in New Jersey when I had finished the literary workshop at Princeton University. His current dream is to travel to Cuba to discuss in person with Fidel the establishment of a permanent AP office in Havana, similar to the CNN office there.

"I can't be sure, but it seems to me that it was clear from the lively conversation in the White House that they did not have, do not know, or did not want to reveal any immediate intention to resume travel to Cuba by Americans. But I should emphasize that at no time was there any mention of democratic reforms, free elections or human rights, nor any of the political platitudes with which Americans attempt to condition any proposals for collaboration with Cuba. On the contrary, my clearest impression of this trip is the certainty that reconciliation is beginning to take root in the collective consciousness as something inevitable.

"Clarke called us back to order when the conversation began to drift and indicated to me — perhaps as a message — that they would take immediate steps to establish a joint United States-Cuba counter-terrorism plan. After making lengthy notes in his notepad, Dobbins concluded that they would communicate with their embassy in Cuba to take the project forward. I made an ironic remark about the status he was attributing to the Interests Section in Havana, to which Dobbins responded good-humouredly, 'What we have there, while not an embassy, is much bigger than an embassy'. They all laughed with a little mischievous complicity. No other points were discussed, since it did not seem appropriate, but I trust that they discussed them among themselves afterwards.

"The whole meeting, counting 'Mack's' late arrival, lasted 50 minutes. 'Mack' brought it to a close with a stock phrase: 'I know that you have a very packed schedule before you return to Mexico and we also have a lot to do'. Then he made a short and concise statement that sounded like a formal response to our initiative. It would be rash to attempt to reproduce it verbatim, but the sense and tone of his words expressed his appreciation for the great significance of the message, which deserved the full attention of his Government and which would be addressed as a matter of urgency. Then, by way of a happy ending, and looking straight into my eyes, he gave me a personal compliment: 'Your mission was extremely important, and you have discharged it very well'. Neither my excessive reserve nor my non-existent modesty has allowed me to leave that phrase to the ephemeral glory of the microphones hidden in the vases.

"I left the White House with the firm impression that the efforts and uncertainties of the previous days had been worth the while. My disappointment at not having delivered the message to the President in person had been mitigated by what turned out to be a more informal and functional meeting, the positive outcome of which would soon emerge. Likewise, knowing the affinities between Clinton and 'Mack' and the nature of their friendship, which dated back to elementary school, I was sure that sooner or later the document would end up in the President's hands during an intimate after-dinner conversation. At the end of the meeting, thanks to a

gallant gesture, the President also made an appearance: as I left the office, an usher handed me an envelope containing photographs of my previous visit taken six months previously in the Oval Office. So, on my way back to the hotel, my only frustration was that I had failed to discover or enjoy the miracle of cherry blossoms in that glorious springtime.

"I barely had time to pack and catch the 5 p.m. plane. The one that had brought me from Mexico 14 days before had had to return to base with a damaged turbine and we waited in the airport for four hours until another plane was available. The one I took back to Mexico, after the meeting in the White House, was delayed in Washington for an hour and a half while the radar was repaired with the passengers on board. It landed in Mexico five hours later, because one runway was out of service. Nothing like that had happened to me since I began flying 52 years ago. But it could not have been otherwise — a mission of peace that will occupy a privileged place in my memoirs. 13 May 1998."

The historic report ended here.

9 May 1998: The acting Head of USINT, John Boardman, was received at MINREX to pass on a message which USINT had been instructed on the night of 8 May to deliver to Alarcón and MINREX. The message arrived no doubt on that same day or had the impact that Márquez expected it to have. Boardman said that the Government of Cuba had, by some means unknown to him, informed the Government of his country that our authorities had well-founded concerns that organizations based in the United States planned to carry out terrorist acts against Cuba, especially in the tourism sector and more specifically attacks on passenger aircraft carrying tourists to and from Cuba.

He had been instructed to deliver the following reply of the United States Government:

- The Government of the United States has no information on links between United States citizens and the terrorist acts committed in the hotels. There has been speculation in the press but the United States Government has no reliable information on this matter.
- The United States Government has sent numerous diplomatic notes indicating its willingness to review any information or physical evidence that the Government of Cuba may have to back up this information.
- The United States Government wishes to reiterate that this is a serious offer. It is prepared to accept any information and to consider whether it might be possible for its experts to examine any physical evidence that the Government of Cuba may have.
- The United States Government expresses its concern over these terrorist actions and is willing to act on this information to enforce the law and combat international terrorism.
- The United States Government requests the Government of Cuba to share any relevant information it may receive from other Governments concerning the risk of terrorist acts on flights to Cuba from their territories.

11 May 1998: Remírez reported that he had been summoned to the State Department for a meeting with John Hamilton, who had raised the following points with him:

(1) The purpose of the meeting was to reiterate the request USINT had made the previous Saturday and to respond to our concerns about terrorist activities against Cuba using double-track diplomacy to expedite matters.

(2) They took our concerns about possible terrorist acts against tourist facilities and aircraft seriously, as they had on previous occasions.

(3) According to their investigations, there was nothing to indicate the existence of plans originating in the United States.

(4) In the past, when we had made allegations that people and/or organizations in the United States might be involved in terrorist acts against Cuba, they had asked us for evidence so that they could investigate.

(5) This time they wished to emphasize the seriousness of the United States offer to investigate and take appropriate action on the basis of any evidence that we might have. This was not an attempt to put the ball back in our court, nor was it a mere formality.

(6) They wished to seriously examine together any evidence we might have and to follow up on it for clarification. We thanked them for their offer and assured them that we would pass it on to our authorities. We asked whether the offer included cooperation between the two countries in a possible investigation, to which Hamilton replied that he supposed so. Hamilton repeated that this was a serious offer and not merely a diplomatic reply, adding that this important issue was the only purpose of the meeting.

12 May 1998: MINREX summoned the acting Head of USINT for a meeting and delivered the following response to the request they had made on Saturday 9 May on behalf of the United States Government. Remember that Gabriel García's meeting at the White House had taken place on 8 May. Our reply was the following:

> "The information we have is reliable, but it came through sensitive sources that cannot be revealed. We cannot work as you suggest. We are satisfied to know that you are on the alert and paying attention to the problem".

The acting Head of USINT accepted this and thanked us for our prompt reply. He said he was willing to pass on any information that we considered relevant without compromising our source. His companion, who has been described as the USINT official in charge of law enforcement and security matters, assured us that they would be following this matter very closely through all possible channels and all their agencies, and by keeping in contact with various groups. They would also check with the security services of other countries. He said they thought that "at this juncture, any threat of this nature is intolerable".

20 May 1998: Alarcón received a telephone call from Hamilton in Washington, who explained that he was calling him personally because of the importance of the matter and that he wished to state the following:

- About the risk of terrorist acts against aircraft flying to Cuba: they took the information passed on by Cuba very seriously and would adopt security measures for aircraft leaving from the United States.

- In order to take any other action they would need to study the evidence we had in Cuba. They were willing to send United States experts to Cuba to review it with us.

- On the basis of the information received from us, they could not warn other countries from which aircraft also fly to Cuba. If we decided to issue such a warning we could tell those countries that the United States was willing to give immediate attention to requests for technical assistance to prevent any incidents.

3 June 1998: Michael Kozak, Head of USINT, met with Alarcón. He said that an FBI delegation was preparing to travel to Cuba and gave him a copy of the text that the Americans were planning to circulate to airlines for the Cubans to look over. The text read as follows:

> "We have received unconfirmed information about a plot to place explosive devices on civilian aircraft flying between Cuba and countries in Latin America. The people involved in the plot plan to leave a small explosive device on board an aircraft with the intention of activating it during the flight. The explosive device is reported to be small with a fuse and a digital timer that can be programmed 99 hours before it is to go off. No specific targets, places or time frames have been identified.
>
> "We cannot rule out the possibility that the threat may extend to international cargo flights from the United States. The United States Government is still seeking additional information to clarify and to verify or discount this threat".

4 June 1998: Alarcón is instructed to reply that the delegation could travel to Cuba after 15 June.

5 June 1998: Alarcón gives the Head of USINT the Cuban response, which I also drafted myself — I had been following the problem, as was logical and essential, from the time we sent the message — to the information circular drafted by the United States. Our response reads, and I quote:

> "We did not ask you to issue any warning to airlines. That is not the way to deal with this problem. Measures of a different kind can and must be taken to deal with it." Indeed, we have taken many measures to protect aircraft. In particular, we had been making such proposals for weeks until, of course, the setbacks they suffered with the arrests in Cuba, the discovery of all their plans and the confessions of those arrested enabled us to become aware of it all in detail, to denounce it and to disrupt their plans. It was Cuba that disrupted those plans. And so we said and I have to say again: that is not the way to deal with the problem, which can and must be resolved by other means. "No one can guarantee discretion. An indiscretion in this case could hamper the investigation and place obstacles in the way of more efficient measures.
>
> "Moreover, the circulation of such a warning might create panic", and indeed it has, "causing considerable damage to the Cuban economy, which is exactly what the terrorists want. This damage could also extend to the airlines.
>
> "We therefore do not agree that a warning should be issued and we seriously oppose it. We can carefully review with your group of experts the most advisable steps to take."

Since they were kind enough or, if you like, showed us the elementary courtesy of consulting us on the note they planned to circulate, we explained our point of view.

At the meeting, the Head of USINT suggested that there might have been some confusion in relation to the first message (in which they had thought we were asking them to issue a warning) or that there might be some legal obligation on the part of their authorities to warn the airlines and thereby protect themselves from any future claims. He said that he would pass on Cuba's position to Washington and that they would not issue any warning.

6 June 1998: Another meeting between Alarcón and the Head of USINT, who delivered the United States response to the document handed over the day before, which he had earlier read to Alarcón over the telephone, and which stated:

"(1) The draft alert already provided to the Cuban side is called an 'information circular'. Under United States aviation laws and regulations, information is required to be circulated to the internal security services of airlines whenever the United States Government has any credible information concerning a possible threat to aircraft.

They explained that there are laws and regulations which require them to circulate information. Well, there could have been some discussion as to how to do so, without including all the information we had provided in the message.

(2) The Federal Aviation Administration issues approximately 15 to 20 information circulars every year. These are not public documents.

Of course they are not public, but if you circulate dozens, hundreds of documents, it creates alarm everywhere. It becomes impossible to carry out a serious investigation, which is the important thing — to investigate, collect evidence, and find and detain the perpetrators. I have a duty to tell you what their position was. It is possible that I am not fully aware of all these regulations which they believed required them to report the threat.

(3) Under our laws and regulations, we are required to proceed immediately to notify the airlines which have aircraft flying between the United States and Cuba directly or via third countries, and to inform the Governments of third countries. We have no choice in this respect, they said, once we believe the information to be credible.

Yes, the information was certainly credible. We were in a good position to know this, as demonstrated by the answers we gave him, which reliably indicated that the information we had received was true and by the fact that some of the perpetrators had been detained while others had escaped.

(4) Given the nature of this information and our obligation to cooperate with other countries to prevent attacks on aircraft, we continue to consider it important for you or us to notify airlines flying from other destinations and the Governments responsible. Were it possible for the Cuban side to move up the meeting of experts to early next week (for example, Tuesday or Wednesday), we would propose issuing the alerts after we had had the opportunity to evaluate the information with the Cuban side. If such an early meeting is not

feasible, we would proceed to issue the alerts. Any further steps could be determined during the expert meeting to be held in the week of 15 June.

This note is in fact dated 6 June. A meeting like the one on 15 June cannot be improvised or prepared in two days. It requires at least five or six days, so it could not be brought forward to 7 June and did in fact take place on 15 June, which was the agreed date.

(5) We appreciate the points made by the Cuban authorities, who request that we seek to avoid prejudicing the investigation and adversely affecting the airlines and the Cuban economy. We are doing our best in this regard, subject to the limited discretion afforded by our laws and regulations and the priority we attach to preventing attacks on civilian aircraft. Again, these information circulars are relatively routine and, in our experience, even when they become public they do not normally have a significant or lasting impact on passenger or cargo air transport".

Indeed I must say that they responded to every one of the issues we had raised. In my judgement, the discussions took place in good faith. There was no bad faith. We tried to push them a bit on the issue, but we saw how strongly they were insisting that certain legal instruments obliged them to take that course of action.

That same day, Alarcón delivered to the Head of USINT a new response from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which read as follows:

"We disagree. The possible publication of this information will hinder the investigation and aid and abet terrorist plots against the Cuban economy.

"We are unaware of and cannot understand the existence of obligations of a legal nature which, far from benefiting them, can adversely affect the efforts being made to prevent human victims and material damage.

"The publication of the details of the methods that might be used to carry out such acts is undeniably an error that may assist the plans of active or potential terrorist groups." We did not want them to publish the information because that would be providing technical data on how to prepare such attacks. "We respect the policies of the United States authorities, but we do not agree on how to counter these activities, which should be analysed, using the information available, with the required care and thoroughness."

It is now perfectly clear. They no doubt feared that such an incident or act of sabotage might take place and that, even though they had the information, they might have failed to share it with the airline. In fact, however, the information might have served absolutely no purpose since the airlines lack the capacity, the means, the background data and the information they need to prevent a terrorist act of this nature.

The Head of USINT indicated that he had spoken with Dobbins, the official responsible for Latin American affairs at the National Security Council, who had asked for the following additional points to be raised:

- They were obliged under United States law to alert airlines flying from the United States and, under international agreements, airlines flying to Cuba from other countries. The decision to issue this warning showed that they took our information seriously and considered it credible.

And it was this tremendous concern that caused them to circulate the information immediately.

- With regard to paragraph 4 of the document, Dobbins insisted that we should not interpret it in any way as an attempt to apply pressure. The problem is that, while they are obliged to immediately inform the airlines that fly from the United States, their obligation towards airlines flying from other countries, although it exists, is less pressing, but they cannot withhold the information for a whole week. Theoretically, the meeting of experts might have concluded that the threat was not so imminent, but since their initial premise was to take our information seriously and treat it as credible, they could not wait all that time without fulfilling their obligations.

I have no doubt whatsoever that those exchanges with them were conducted in good faith. I have to admit the truth, that both sides were serious.

8 June 1998: The Federal Aviation Agency issued the information circular, the one already mentioned. In other words, almost the same day, just two days later.

15 June 1998: The FBI delegation arrived in Havana to meet with Cuban authorities.

16-17 June 1998: Several joint meetings of Cuban experts and FBI agents were held on the subject of planned terrorist attacks. The FBI delegation was given a great deal of information in the form of documents and testimonies. The material supplied included 64 pages containing information from investigations into 31 terrorist acts and plans against our country between 1990 and 1998. Most of these actions could be traced back to the Cuban American National Foundation, which also organized and financed the most dangerous actions, especially those carried out by the terrorist network led by Luis Posada Carriles in Central America. This information included detailed accounts, and photographs of weapons, explosives and other materiel seized in each case. Additionally, the FBI were given 51 pages of information on the financing provided by the Cuban American National Foundation to different terrorist groups for their actions against Cuba. They were also given recordings of 14 telephone conversations by Luis Posada Carriles in which he provided information about terrorist attacks on Cuba. Information was provided on how to locate Posada, such as his home addresses, places he frequented, the characteristics and numberplates of cars he used in El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Panama. They also received transcripts of eight conversations with terrorists detained in Cuba in which they reveal their ties to Posada.

The FBI agents were also given 60 pages with files on 40 Cuban-born terrorists, most of whom live in Miami, and information on how to find them. They also took with them three 2-gram samples of explosive substances from the bombs that were deactivated in the Meliá Cohiba hotel on 30 April 1997 and in a tourist minibus on 19 October 1997, as well as the explosive device confiscated from two Guatemalan terrorists on 4 March 1998.

In addition, they were given 5 video and 8 audio cassettes with statements by the Central American terrorists who had been arrested for placing bombs in hotels. In these statements, they told of their connection to Cuban terrorist organizations operating out of the United States and, in particular, to Luis Posada Carriles.

The United States side acknowledged the value of the information they had been given and undertook to respond as soon as possible with an analysis of the materials.

Curiously, nearly three months went by without the serious response promised. Only a few unimportant items of information were received.

On 12 September — please note, three months had not yet passed — the five comrades, now Heroes of the Republic of Cuba (applause) were arrested. Deployed in Miami, they were our main source of information about terrorist activities against our country. No terrorists have been arrested anywhere, but the comrades who had provided the information were detained although, naturally, there was no means of identifying the sources. What they could see was that there was serious and reliable information and that our charges were very well-founded and true. Of course, they were not the only source of information, but an important source.

One of them was responsible for monitoring the activities of none other than Orlando Bosch, who was pardoned in the United States despite his monstrous crimes.

What really happened? The top brass of the Miami mafia had become aware of the contacts and information sharing between Cuban and United States authorities about the brutal acts of terrorism that were being carried out with impunity against our country, and mobilized all their forces and influence — which, as we know, are considerable — to prevent at all costs any progress in that area.

Who was one of the main individuals responsible for breaking off the contacts? The chief of the FBI in Miami, Hector Pesquera. This official had held the same position in Puerto Rico at the time when a commando group organized directly by the paramilitary wing of the Cuban American National Foundation was arrested after being captured by the coastguard off that island and their boat and weapons seized. Everyone knows what was the objective of that commando group on the island of Margarita, at an international meeting to which we had been invited and which we attended.

Pesquera was a member of the mafia and a key factor in ensuring that this terrorist group had complete impunity.

It is known that there was fierce resistance at the highest echelons of the FBI to the idea of discontinuing the sharing of information with Cuba, but the clout and political influence of the mafia leaders won out. They clearly prevailed, even over the President of the United States and the National Security Council.

There is no doubt that the FBI was already on the trail of the Cuban anti-terrorist group, about whose plans to blow up aircraft on the ground or in mid-flight I had informed the President of the United States. Such horrendous acts could take the lives of both Cuban and United States citizens, many of whom travel to Cuba on those aircraft.

Pesquera, chief of the FBI in Miami, focused all his efforts on identifying, tracking down and prosecuting the Cubans. The brutal treatment of the Cuban patriots is common knowledge.

According to an item in the Nuevo Herald on 15 September 1998, the first people Pesquera informed of the arrest of our five heroes were the two members of Congress, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Lincoln Diaz-Balart.

Pesquera himself revealed on a Miami radio programme how he had travelled from Puerto Rico with the intention of taking steps at all costs against the group of Cubans who had infiltrated the Miami terrorist organizations:

> "I arrived here in May of that same year, 1998, and was informed of what was happening. We then began to give priority to this investigation. For intelligence purposes, its status should be changed to that of a criminal investigation."

He had already made his decision and received his orders. He said the search for intelligence activity should be discontinued, and a criminal investigation launched against the Cuban patriots.

The line pursued by our country was quite different. In an interview on 19 October 1998 with the CNN journalist Lucia Newman in Oporto, Portugal, the venue of an Ibero-American Summit, when the legal monstrosities we later witnessed had not yet been committed, I told her the following (this was 19 October, a month and a few days after they had arrested the first comrades):

> "We are willing to cooperate in the struggle against any terrorist activities directed against Cuba or the United States.
>
> "The United States is running a potential risk in respect of the hundreds of extremist organizations, many of them armed in the United States itself. Some of the methods used against Cuba could also be used in the United States because some of these organizations are well-developed and sophisticated." I was referring to their methods, procedures and techniques. "We have informed the United States authorities, we have told them, communicated to them the terrorist methods that are being used against our country, sharing our experiences with them. This contribution might help them to defend themselves, because I consider the United States to be very vulnerable to this type of attack."

The most tragic aspect of all this for the people of the United States is that while Pesquera and his team were viciously pursuing, arresting and shamelessly prosecuting the Cubans, no fewer than 14 of the 19 participants in the 11 September attacks on New York's Twin Towers and other targets were living and training in exactly the area for which Pesquera was responsible, under his very nose.

Scarcely three years after the arrest of our selfless and valiant comrades — who, with the reports they collected and which were made available to the people of the United States, may have saved many lives among the citizens of that country — thousands of innocent Americans lost their lives on that fateful day in 2001. In other words, less than three years after their arrest, thousands of Americans perished in New York, victims of a terrorist attack for which the great majority of the perpetrators trained in Florida.

As my fellow Cubans and international public opinion can see, nothing has been blacked out in any of the documents which we have declassified.

Before concluding, I should tell you that the author of the report, Gabriel García Márquez, was consulted about its publication. Just yesterday I sent a message to him in Europe, in which I told him the following:

> "It is indispensable that I discuss the subject of the message I sent through you about terrorist activities against our country. This will in no way affect the person to whom it was sent, nor will it affect your literary glory.
>
> "It is basically the message that I sent and the wonderful report you sent back to me, written in your unmistakable style. They are like my own memoirs and I think that yours would be incomplete if they do not include that message".

Everything I have said explains why at the start I spoke of "A different behaviour".

Long live friendship between the peoples of Cuba and the United States! (Exclamations of "Viva").

Motherland or death!

We shall overcome!